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As We See It

Needed: Tight Controls On Intelligence Apparatus

ADMIRAL Stansfield Turner's proposal that the U.S. create an overall intelligence director has set the stage for a major debate on how to organize, for purposes of effective control, our intelligence effort.

The CIA director wants to gather under the direct authority of a national intelligence director all the various intelligence agencies that now exist. In addition to the Central Intelligence Agency, the important ones are the National Security Agency and other agencies under the control of the Pentagon.

Admiral Turner's proposal coincides with the apparent wishes of the Senate Intelligence Committee, but is bitterly opposed by Harold Brown, the secretary of Defense.

There are risks involved in creating an intelligence czar with far-reaching powers, and columnist Tom Wicker is right in sug-

gesting that President Carter not think about just what it will be like with Admiral Turner at the helm. Nonetheless, it seems to us that, on balance, the country would be better served by having responsibility centered in one person.

The job description and the restrictions on the office, should the president decide to go that way, will have to be crafted with care. The government will need to have both a sufficient degree of control and the means to make the intelligence apparatus work effectively. That balance is not easy to strike.

If the president decides to opt for the single intelligence director, the role of congressional oversight becomes all the more important. Congress will need to focus responsibility clearly, and it will have to see that its committees are not co-opted by the agency.

In the clean-up after all the revelations about the CIA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, one point needs to be kept in mind: Many of the abuses occurred because of the actions of people who were elected and therefore technically accountable to the people. It is as important that we build in protections against abuse by the president, or default by Congress, as well as runaway actions by bureaucrats hidden away in an agency. If that point is kept central, it should be possible to fashion a structure that is both efficient and an effective means of controlling the intelligence activities.



Brown



Turner

Control for CIA, NSA